



ROLE PLAYING EXERCISE:

Meet Your Expectations

Do you think drinking a sports drink will make you a better athlete? What about if you wear the coolest new clothes—will everyone stop and check you out?

These are examples of expectations—what we think will happen. We get expectations about lots of things from lots of sources, including friends, family, celebrities, and social media.

Everyone has expectations when they think about trying something new, but will those things really happen? Sometimes expectations are right on, but often they are totally off, especially when you're talking about alcohol.



Well, what did you expect ...
to have more fun and excitement?

STUDENT 1: Some middle schoolers think people who drink have more fun and excitement.

STUDENT 2: Yeah, TV and movies can give you that idea.

STUDENT 1: But in real life, people who drink to get drunk don't have more fun. In fact, they are more stressed and depressed.

STUDENT 2: Not good. If you want to have more fun, it's better to go to new places or take on new challenges.

STUDENT 1: Right, like working out or getting good at a new game, or maybe trying a musical instrument or braving the great outdoors.



National Institute
on Alcohol Abuse
and Alcoholism



Well, what do you expect ...
to fit in better?

STUDENT 1: Some middle schoolers think drinking will make them fit in better.

STUDENT 2: I guess they may fit in with people who drink, but most middle schoolers don't drink.

STUDENT 1: If they want to fit in better, they should choose friends who don't drink.



Well, what did you expect...
to impress others?

STUDENT 1: Some people think drinking will impress others.

STUDENT 2: No way! Acting stupid, throwing up, and starting fights doesn't impress people.

STUDENT 1: Instead, they should show their talents, and focus on the things they can do well.

STUDENT 2: And it really impresses people if you're polite and a good listener.



Well, what did you expect...
to feel good?

STUDENT 1: Some people think drinking will make them feel good or improve how they feel.

STUDENT 2: But if they're feeling down, drinking can make it worse. Way worse...

STUDENT 1: If people want to feel better, they need to talk about their problems with someone they trust. And if they're depressed, they shouldn't wait to get help.

STUDENT 2: It also helps to exercise and do things they know they'll enjoy.



Well, what did you expect...
to be more attractive?

STUDENT 1: Some people think drinking will make them more attractive.

STUDENT 2: Yeah, right! Throwing up, being drunk, and saying stupid things aren't attractive.

STUDENT 1: To be more attractive, they should start by being confident and showing that they respect themselves.

STUDENT 2: Another way is to exercise. I found some good fitness ideas online.



Well, what did you expect...
to relax, feel less shy or nervous?

STUDENT 1: Some people think alcohol will make them feel more relaxed and less shy or nervous.

STUDENT 2: People may feel more relaxed, but alcohol can also relax their judgement. So they say and do things they regret.

STUDENT 1: Yeah, like crying or arguing or getting into fights.

STUDENT 2: To feel less shy at parties, they can think ahead about things to talk about.

STUDENT 2: Yeah, like maybe video games or sports. Or movies and TV shows.



Well, what did you expect...
to be funny?

STUDENT 1: I know some middle schoolers who think drinking makes them funnier and helps them say clever things.

STUDENT 2: Puh-leeze. People who haven't been drinking usually think that people who drink are not funny at all.

STUDENT 1: If people want to be funnier, they can learn some jokes and practice telling them to friends.

STUDENT 2: Or just tell funny stories about things that happen to them.



Well, what did you expect...
to solve your problems or
forget about them?

STUDENT 1: Some people think drinking will help them solve their problems or forget about them.

STUDENT 2: Actually, alcohol messes up a person's thinking. You can't solve problems that way.

STUDENT 1: That's true. And drinking to escape problems can lead to more problems, including a bad pattern of drinking.

STUDENT 2: A better way to solve problems is by talking them over with someone you trust, like family, friends, or a counselor.

STUDENT 1: Yes—and if one approach doesn't work, it's important to try another and not give up.